

## **Robert Curvin Interview: Rebecca Doggett**

DOGGETT: My earliest involvement in civil rights and the political struggles in this area started really when I went away to college.

I went to Oberlin College in Ohio, this was the first time that I had been away from home, I was only 16 at the time and became very fascinated with a number of the African students who were on the campus at Oberlin. This was 1957, so this was the time when Ghana and Nigeria were getting their independence.

This was like a real awakening to me, like wow these African countries where getting their independence these young people from these countries were on the campus at Oberlin and they talked about their lives and their struggles and I really got very excited about what was happening in these African countries.

While I was at Oberlin I really saw myself as perhaps getting involved in the Foreign Service, I was good at languages and thought I might have some kind of career at the UN or Foreign Service. I became much more tuned into politically what was happening in other parts of the world and then began to pay a lot more attention to what was happening here at home.

I had been to the first March on Washington in 57, when A. Philip Randolph was really the leader of the Civil Rights Movement, Martin was just kind of being recognized as coming into his own.

I began to realize that there was a lot going on here at home that I could even get involved in. Finance is forced me to come back home after two years at Oberlin, so I came home here to Orange and began to work part-time go to college part-time at Uppsala in East Orange and began to look around at what was going on in my local town.

By then it was '58 a well-known family doctor, Dr. John Alexander declared that he was going to run for city-wide election in Orange so everyone was very excited about the idea that an African American was going to run for office.

He lost that election, it was a city-wide form of city government at that point everybody ran city-wide. Of course that's done, the Black community that someone as well off and as well-known has Dr. Alexander couldn't win a city-wide election we were very puzzled.

It was not long after that that a number of us young folks got interested in forming our own political organization in Orange called the Non-partisan Organization for Liberal Action, NOLA for short. We started working and a good friend of ours, Ray Murphy he decided that he was going to make the next shot at running for city office.

In the meantime, we ran across a guy named Ernie Thompson who is an old union organizer had come out of the UE had been forced out of the union by the McCarthy era had ended up, he has been a national leader, really an excellent community organizer around the country but had

ended up living in Orange because that was the place that he could afford for himself and his family.

Ernie was also starting to get involved in local politics and we finally cross paths, he made a point of catching up to us young folks and he tried to convince our friend Murphy that he should not run for city-wide office that it couldn't be done, that it would just keep discouraging people in Orange, to keep running Citywide and losing. He tried to convince us that we should work with him in a coalition and work for a change in government, a charter change that would be a mayor/council form of government with ward level city council people.

If we had a ward council rep then we would be sure to get at least one person, African American person, elected from the East Ward.

We were very determined that we knew what we were doing and weren't paying much attention to what Ernie was talking about.

Eventually though, Ray did run and lost as Ernie said he would, but at the same time I convinced our group that we should join forces with the charter change and we did join forces with the League of Women Voters and Ernie had an organization that was called Citizens for Representative Government.

We were successful at getting the government changed to a mayor/council. Then the question became who would be the first candidate for running for city council. We still were not paying a lot of attention to what Ernie had to offer, we said ah this old guy oh, you know he's not that well educated he really talks around in circles we couldn't really understand what he was talking about most of the time and we decided that we were still going to do it our way. So I guess Ernie finally decided that he wasn't getting through to us so he decided that he had to run someone against us to defeat us and he did and he won.

[laughs] By then it was 1962 we couldn't figure out how did we lose that election, we had the smartest guy and so forth and so on but in that election this was the first time that I saw what having union members and the Democratic Party working for you.

Ernie pulled out all the stops he got lots of people from Newark, and he's got all these union people coming in Orange. So he pulled out all the stops he got all his old friends to come up to Orange to help win the election. On our side we had The Young Turks from Newark, the Payne Brothers, and I think Bob you even came up to help Ray Murphy out. so we had The Young Turks who came to help us but they had the strong forces that defeated us I can remember the night of the election after we had lost and we were sitting in our barbershop headquarters feeling very forlorn ironically we said well at least Addonizio won in Newark, which now of course is very ironic, but we thought that was a great accomplishment that Addonizio had won in Newark.

We were sitting there feeling very sorry for ourselves and Ernie came by the headquarters and of course most of our colleagues there in the barbershop thought he was coming to kind of crow about the election but he didn't he sat quietly and he talked to us about how important it was to stay involved and that they needed young people and he hoped that we would come around and start working now and really try to rebuild this new government that we were going to have in Orange.

I was very impressed with that and the fact that he took the time to do that, that really began to start of the beginning of my real political education and sort of apprentice-ing myself to Ernie as my journeyman politician to really learn more about what it would take to be effective and in being in politics.

So very soon after that my then-husband Ed Andretti [41:41] and I started to keep in touch with Ernie and we very soon after that moved to Newark and got very active in the civil rights work in Newark through the congress of racial equality, and Bob Curvin and others who were very active in CORE at that time. But we always went back to Orange on a weekly basis. Ernie and Ben Jones and John Alexander who were all part of the same African American political leadership in Orange, we would sit in on their meetings and try to learn from what they were doing and their struggles in Orange and they would always have time to listen to what we were trying to do in Newark. So that began many years of mentoring by Ernie Thompson, and I really attribute whatever accomplishments that I've had in Newark to the fact that I was able to become an apprentice if you will to someone like Ernie that really contributed significantly to the struggles that I got involved with starting in about 1963 when we moved to Newark.

CURVIN: Why don't we move now to what was Newark like when you moved there and what did you do in Newark other than working with CORE? What was your day job?

DOGGETT: When we first moved to Newark I began working as director of a non-profit effort that a number of us put together called the Community Mobilization Center, this was an aid and information center that was located on South Orange Avenue, we had got the unions to renovate the space, the Urban League loan, the staff to support it, basically what we were doing there it was a walk-in center where local folks from the central ward could come in and get help with whatever problems they had whether it was eviction notices, where to find jobs, looking for childcare, we just sort of took things as they came in and the United Labor Organization had someone on the phone that worked with us. In the evening we did tutoring for young folks who wanted to take test for union apprenticeships and construction apprenticeships, we had a whole host of things going on but at the same time interestingly this was our work we thought we were doing something significant in Newark. The political powers-that-be saw it differently. What they saw, the black democratic leadership, Honeyward [38:27] and that team in Newark, they saw it as an invasion, they felt that this was our attempts to set up an enclave in the central ward that would work towards trying to take over the Democratic Party in the central ward.

They were gearing up for a big fight with us, luckily our friend Ernie from Orange interceded again oh, he came to Newark he knew all the players from many years ago, came to Newark called a meeting of the Black politicians from the central ward and kind of laid his hands on us and said these are good people they really are sincere they are not trying to take over your Democratic Party Machine, they're my friends and I want you to leave them alone and don't mess with them.

If it hadn't been for that we probably would not have lasted for too long on South Orange Avenue [laughs] the significance of that work there was important because it gave us space to work with the anti-poverty effort that was just starting, we were one of the few organizations that had contact with local poor people before the anti-poverty program. There was a lot of planning going on, setting up of area boards, trying to get input from local poor people, the fact that we

had the information center and working with poor people gave us a good base, if you will, of people we could call on to be a part of the effort.

Plus, we began to-- some of the insight and fact that Ernie had gained from the Orange struggles, he was convinced that we should invest a lot of effort into education and talked about the that the anti-poverty program was going to fund early childhood education (Head Start) and that it would make sense for us to focus on how could we organize and try to make sure that Newark invested a large part of its anti-poverty money into education, early childhood education.

So out of that Center on South Orange Avenue came our core group, mainly a coalition with the Protestant churches, community-based organizations, parents who wanted education for their kids, and that became the start of what became known as the Newark Preschool Council. Got Incorporated luckily the first director that the United Community Corporation was Cyril Thyson [35:30] from Harlem who understood the value of early childhood education and Community involvement. So he kind of ran front guard for us piloting us through all of the political sharks that were in the water at that time. So we began to work of putting together the coalition of parents and community to write the proposal for citywide early childhood education in Newark.

I guess it wasn't until many months later that we heard that LadyBird had named the program Head Start. So I think we had our proposal in Washington long before the program had a name, its official name. We were one of the first programs that were funded for early childhood education.

CURVIN: Did you get any opposition from the city in terms of controlling the-- this sounds like this was a Bottoms Up operation

DOGGETT: This was very much a Bottoms Up operation. The greatest fight that we had was not from the city government per se but it was from the Catholic Church and the Protestant community chest folks because they knew about the funding that was coming, and they thought that they should get the funding. Both of them of course had been running daycare centers and early childhood programs for many years, so they thought rightfully it should be sponsored by them. For a while the Newark Board of Education thought that they should get the money because they were the educators after all , but our whole fight, many of us were civil rights people, we wanted to make sure that this early childhood money from Washington did not get into the hands of the public schools, so we wanted to make sure that it was a community controlled program and luckily through the Council of Churches, the Newark Council of Churches, Kim Jefferson and a number of the clergy who were more of the activist clergy they sided with us and helped us organize and form the group.

Thyson, he was able to convince the Catholic Diocese and the Protestant Community chest folks to join forces with us rather than them fight it. So somehow through his good negotiating whatever they joined forces with us and we formed the Newark Preschool Council which was quiet and uneasy coalition for many, many years but we were able to get the funds set up, early childhood centers, and the churches open their doors oh, so we started with about 60 classes all over Newark. That was a major effort and a real commitment on a part of a lot of those churches because most of them kept their door shut during the weekdays, they were pretty poor, and losing members so they really didn't have much, but they did open the buildings for the Head Start

classes, they also had to heat the buildings, we did not have money for that, they had to have maintenance and so forth. So it really was a significant contribution on the part of these churches that open their doors.

CURVIN: Tell me about the accomplishments of the program itself, you said there were 60 classes around the city?

DOGGETT: There were 60 sites and at that point 120 classes because we had a morning group and an afternoon group so it was double. The first thing that was so significant, I think, was bringing together all these different people was one of the very first efforts where the Latino community was very involved from the beginning, they were on the policy group that was set up, they helped plan, teams of Spanish-speaking volunteers went out into the community and talked to the parents about letting their kids-- and that was a major effort because a lot of the Latino mothers especially felt it was their main job to be at home taking care of the children.

So the idea that you would take a child to a center, and leave the child, that was like unheard of.

They had to do a lot of talking, and our volunteers did a lot of talking to the fathers and the mothers saying this was going to help their children, they were going to learn English, they'd be ready for kindergarten, they'd be in much better shape because they went to Head Start, they would get healthcare, they would get a lot of benefits.

So needless to say the biggest number of volunteers we had were the Spanish-speaking mothers, because they would bring the kids but they would stay, they would help, they would stay and that was a good thing because they realize they could get their high school diploma, it could help them as well as help the children. So I think that one of the biggest contributions that Head Start made, it really did help the whole family. We had the kids in the classroom but we also had the parents, we had other people in the neighborhoods who began to understand more about what education could be, not only for their children but also how they could go back to school, they could get a high school diploma, they could go to college, in those days welfare was still paying for college.

A lot of the mothers who brought their kids, opted and got college degrees, and a significant number of those folks eventually became the professionals in the Head Start program and actually had fed a lot of the other Early Childhood programs in Newark and Essex County. They became certified teachers, certified social workers, certified directors and so forth. So it really fed a lot of the early childhood work that was going on forty-something years later.

CURVIN: Does the preschool council still exist today?

DOGGETT: The Newark Preschool Council still exists, it's still going strong from what I see, and still has these very deep roots in all the neighborhoods around the city of Newark.

One of the really great things they've done in recent years, they've built a number of their own buildings, I'm sure there are still a lot of centers in church basements, and public housing projects, but they have been able to put a lot of effort into building very nice facilities around the city which is really great because Head Start even with all the attacks against Head Start that we've seen from Washington, it still prevails and I think it's because it has done so much good

that people refuse to let it be wiped out so you know Head Start is still a very important early childhood initiative in Newark as well as around the country.

The other thing that Head Start did that was significant was placing a lot of emphasis on early intervention in terms of health. Before Head Start there was really no attention being paid to the dental needs of kids, eye screening, and other kinds of health check-ups that made sense to pick up early.

People, middle-income people, or people with money would take their kids to a doctor and have these things done, but until Head Start poor people had no way of even knowing that these are things that they should be doing or how to go about getting those kinds of screenings done. It was also significant and picking up early on learning disabilities that the children had been trying to begin to learn to work with those learning disabilities with the kids as well as with the parents. So as the kids got older and got into public school, they would at least have some support that was offered to them.

CURVIN: Let me switch for a minute to construction trades and getting apprenticeships for African American and Puerto Rican young people in the city and in the county area. When did you start working in this area and can you sort of trace your history and development of this effort?

DOGGETT: Well I'm not exaggerating when I said it took 40 years , one of the first projects that I learned a lot about when I was still living in Orange, Ernie Thompson and the Citizens Representative Government were able to convince Alan Sagner who was building the Washington Dodd Apartments over on Thomas Boulevard, convinced him to press the contractors in the unions to hire local residents into apprenticeships and Sagner was always a very forward-thinking person he was very receptive to it, got something going for the Building Trades to agree.

When Ernie and his people started sending young folks, and these were kids with high school diplomas, when they started sending them to take the union test, they were not passing the union test.

At first we thought this was a trumped-up test, the unions were trying to keep us out but we began to realize that part of what was happening was that these young folks did not have enough math and reading abilities.

That's part of what drove Ernie and his leadership to focus on the public schools because they realized the kids were coming out with a high school diploma but they couldn't read functionally and didn't know enough math to pass an apprenticeship test.

So that was my first exposure to why you have to have pre-apprenticeship and you had to prepare these young folks to get into building trades, it wasn't just a matter of walking through the door and sitting down. So that was back in the early 60s, it wasn't until quite a bit later, I was working for the Port Authority so this was in the 80s that I became involved with New York City and a pre-apprenticeship program that was being sponsored there.

The building trades people were very positive about the young folks that they were getting coming out of the public school as a result of this pre-apprenticeship that the port authority and the school construction people in New York had put together, so I was impressed with the fact that they had gotten the New York City Building Trades Council to support this program and they were very positive.

They were saying that a lot of the candidates that they were getting from this pre-apprenticeship program were better than the young folks that they were referring through the old nepotism system, so that stuck with me.

Very soon after that I left the port authority to go work for the Newark Public Schools and this was right at the beginning of the time when the Abbott decision had come down mandating that the state pay for, not only for instructional programs for low-income kids but would also pay for facilities. I got very involved on behalf of the superintendent of schools to represent the Newark Public Schools on committees that were trying to make sure the funding came through; the school construction funding came through. We knew that we had a lot of very old dilapidated schools. At that time, I also met Ken Zimmerman who was the executive director of the New Jersey Institute for social justice, a pretty new organization, and they were part of the statewide coalition pushing for the financing of the school construction.

In talking with Ken I said I'm sure the bill is going to pass because the unions are pushing it, the contractors are pushing it, it's going to be great for the economy but there is no guarantee that people in Newark are going to get into those unions unless we do some work to prepare them to get into the unions.

So he was fascinated with the idea and I convinced him that the institute could be a sponsor of a pre-apprenticeship program, I was sure that we could get the help that we needed to put it together. So that's how we started you know 40 years later sponsoring pre-apprenticeship with the help of Gus Henningburg who convinced the unions to meet with us and kind of vouched for us that we were serious, sincere folks.

We met with the Essex County Building Trades Council, they listened and we said we are not going to tell you how to run your union but we know what it takes to qualify people to get in and we will make sure that the Newark people are qualified. We are not going to ask you to water down your standards, we'll make sure we find the right people to meet your standards. And I think that did impress them because they never heard that before from some of their earlier work with people in Essex County.

So that's how we started back in 2001. Very soon after that left the Newark Public Schools and began to work as kind of the lead person if you will in putting this pre-apprenticeship program together. We did a demonstration program with private money the institute put up money, foundations put up money, including Alan Sagner by the way from those early days in Orange.

We sponsored our first demonstration class in 2001, we got a handful of people in about three unions the first time out. Last year we had apprentices in 16 different trades, 16 of the 17 different trades that are members of the Essex County Building Trades Council.

We now have 360 Union apprentices some are journeymen now because they started in the early days. Latino and African-American men and some women who are now members of those different trades. I suspect that when we were out on picket lines back in '63 Bob that some of those guys that were walking past us going into work we're probably some of the old-time leaders of the unions now.

I think it was the leverage of knowing that all this big money coming in school construction, just a different time with different leadership you know and a place that understood that changes coming and we wanted to work in concert with them so we just had enough things lined up at this time to make it happen. So the program is still going even though the economy right now is slow but we expect that this partnership that we have developed with the Building Trades Council will continue. We have established credibility with them and they have established some with us, well we would love to see more apprentices get in but we are pleased.

CURVIN: We didn't talk at all about your experience and community development can you give me a little summary of...

DOGGETT: Tri-Cities Citizen Union for Progress, we started Tri-City back in the late 60s and we always laugh, we said at that point we were optimistic we were going to take on Newark, Jersey City, and Paterson. These were the three cities we were just really going to make big change.

The idea was that leadership from each of those cities would identify projects that they would work in. Those of us who came from Newark pretty early thought that working in housing rehab made sense and we were paying attention, we were seeing what was happening with the displacement of so many thousands of people for the medical school.

The displacement of people but also the total change of neighborhoods, changing the whole character of neighborhoods, this urban renewal money, what we were trying to do, what we wanted to do was with the idea of Tri-City up in the Westside Park area of Newark was to show that if you took good sound houses and rehabilitated them you could add many years of life to that house and it also would kind of keep the character of the neighborhood.

That part of Newark was mostly three family houses, small streets lots of trees lots of neighborhood stores and so forth so we thought that it made sense to show and preserve a neighborhood and give it new life if you put some effort into rehab and don't go for total demolition and all of the neighborhoods of Newark.

So that's how we started and we had an idea, we tried to get funding from the Department of Community Affairs, they liked the idea but they didn't feel that we had any experience in this, and they were very new, this was Paul Ivasocar [16:22] just coming into office and so our idea was languishing and then July 1967 hit Newark.

So everybody was running into Newark, what can we do, what can we do, and so we said that we had a really great idea that for housing and we think that you should give us a chance to do this housing rehab in the West Side Park area of Newark. So they agreed that if we could do a demonstration house that we would have to finance and that if we did that house they would consider making a loan to us.

So a number of African-American professionals led by Ali Lofton got together and formed a corporation called Priorities Housing, put together the money to buy the house and rehab it and based on that demonstration of rehab we went back to Community Affairs and they gave us a one and a half million-dollar loan to buy some more properties in that area and to begin rehab.

So this was before New Community came on the scene, so we were able to get that loan, had to learn a lot about construction, we tried to use local folks but they had never done gut rehab they only had done the slap and paste kind of slum landlord property stuff, so we had our people, actually went to NJIT and took classes on construction management so they could come back and try to better supervise the contracts and so forth.

That effort was very important, those houses lasted another 40 years these houses were probably built in 1900, so those houses we know that we added a lot of life to the Amity Village houses.

More importantly we were also able to convince Community Affairs to let us underwrite the cost of taking what was then a Ukrainian Church and turning it into a Peoples' Center and that's where we sponsored daycare, after school programs, a lot of social programs.

It took a lot of convincing because these warehousing people and they said well we're not supposed to be paying for these kinds of programs and we said well this is what makes a community and you know you really have to have some kind of focal point for the residents to be able to get child care services and other services and so they were willing to add that on to the mortgage.

But this was the first time that the state had ever done that kind of financing now it's all had and the New Community came along and did major, major work in that area but we kind of were the pioneers in doing that kind of community development, investment, a legitimate part of housing. And we had seen what had happened in public housing because that was not done.

Public housing was built with just housing no social services, youth services, no recreational facilities, and we knew that was a major mistake. So we wanted the housing that we were doing to take a different path. It's paid off over and over again.

CURVIN: Let's switch now to public schools. I know that you worked in the school system for a while, you mentioned the work that you did via the construction, but thinking about education in the city, in Newark, a district that is under State jurisdiction, what is the answer to getting more young people functionally prepared to enter the workforce?

DOGGETT: My daughter and two of my step-children went through the Newark Public Schools, we knew the schools were troubled then but I had no idea that they could get worse and they have gotten worse.

I was really working for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey when I first got approached about working for the State Department of Education. This was by Hilda Hidalgo who then was an assistant commissioner under Mayor Lee Fitzgerald. She had just come into office and was trying to put together a different kind of team asking people to work on public education issues.

I was not interested in working in Trenton but then they came back later and said that they were going to have to start an investigation of the Newark schools because they were at that stage in terms of monitoring to decide whether or not the State to take control of the school system. And asked if I could become the auditor-general for the Newark Public Schools, this was a Newark only Newark based position.

I was able to explore the idea of going on loan from the Port Authority so for a year the Port Authority agreed for me to be on loan for the State Department of Education as auditor-general for the Newark Public Schools.

It didn't take me long to be convinced that the takeover was needed to change the direction for Newark, the old crony system, the level of corruption that was happening in Newark Public Schools was so deep that there was no way that there was going to be reform from within.

So I became an early advocate of State takeover, although for most people in Newark-- it was a traumatic thing to happen, most people in Newark were very resentful, they thought it was a racial issue with Governor Whitman but I could see from being auditor-general and watching the abuse that was going on at the school system was really a job mill.

That any of the educators that were really serious about education in Newark hardly had a chance to function. They were saddled with teachers who are not even interested in teaching and had very little recourse to move them out and deal with what was going on. The few parents that were active in the school system had kind of been bought off, they were on the payroll, working, but there was no effort to have an active independent parent leadership.

Most of the community organizations had given up on trying to be active with the school system. Foundations were frustrated because they wanted to help bring resources in but were usually kept at arm's length by the leadership in the school system. They were an enclave that was happy to be an enclave that had all kinds of reasons as to why the kids weren't learning, most of them had to do with the kids themselves or the parents and nothing to do with the school system.

So it was clear that this was sort of a built in operation that was not going to change unless something really, really drastic happened. So I felt that take over was going to be needed.

The thing that I felt that was missing in to take over law was that it really didn't speak to how do you bring the community back into the picture, it talked about finance, it talked about the kids being able to read at state level, but it didn't have a good approach to how to get parents involved and to hold the school system more accountable, how do you get the community back in.

So that was one of signs I had, so I was Auditor General for a year and then I went back to work at the Port Authority and it was maybe not quite a year later, that the court issued a summary judgment ordering the Commissioner of Education to go in and take over the schools.

So the court cut through all the due process of the Board of Education and said that you have to just go in and take over based on the commission findings. And then I was asked by the commissioner if I would come back to Newark and help the new superintendent Beverly Hall. And I agreed to do that, this time I resigned from the Port and came to work for, directly for, the Newark Public Schools, and convinced Dr. Hall that that I could be most useful in setting up

what I called, the Office of Community Development, which was the idea of trying to find ways to get parents involved, get the community to reinvest in the school system, and the plan for return to local control in terms of building and alternative Bottoms Up community involvement process starting at the school level and working its way up to the school board. To me it felt like this was really what was missing in Newark, and this is what could make a difference.

CURVIN: If I remember the reports on this initial audit that you had done, there was some findings that had to do with misdeeds and some pretty serious examples of abusing the healthcare system for example and in some cases actually fraud. The State never followed up on those charges and I always wondered why.

DOGGETT: I could never understand why myself. I think that this was one of the greatest travesties in the whole school investigation. I think that when Beverly Hall came she expected that there was going to be major intervention on the part of the State, not just with her being there running the schools, you know she was perfectly capable, an outstanding educator, but at the same time there would be the Attorney General, the grand jury, there would be all these things that would happen to take these people out of circulation, if you would, because there was so much evidence, and this never happened.

There were special task forces setup that went round and round and round in circles, it never happened. And part of a lot of the detractors that we had to deal with, where those same people who somehow I knew that they were not going to be paying for all the misdeeds, so they were still out there making mischief, they're still making mischief in Newark. And I think that worked against moving the process faster, in terms of the educational process, because people could see.

Even some people who might have come forward to say more wouldn't because they could see that the folks that they were going to talk about were still out there running loose. So whatever was accomplished in the school system, was accomplished in spite of those folks still being out there as opposed to having a much clearer shot at making things turn around. So some things have happened in Newark, I think having 10 years between Beverly Hall and Marion Bolden, having 10 years of two superintendents who focused exclusively on upgrading the educational programs, working with the kids etc., that they had a luxury if you will of being able to concentrate on that and didn't have to do all of the deals that the previous superintendents had to do.

It would have made a lot more progress and had a lot more focus if some of the-- if the right messages were sent and the State had really intervened in taking on some of those folks abused the school system so badly.

CURVIN: I've asked everybody at the end to say a few things about if you were talking to a class of young people today and you were going to capitalize on the wonderful experience you've had in the struggle and all of that and having mentors like by Ernie Thompson, what would you say to young people today about their place in society?

DOGGETT: I guess what I would say to young people and in fact I have said it a few times when I've talked to classes of young people, one of the first things they always ask is how you stayed after so long when you still see so many problems in Newark.

Sometimes I ask myself that but I guess what I always say to them is that even though there are still so many problems, as I look back I can see what a difference having the organizations that I have been involved with do what they did, what a difference it has made to a lot of people, and I really believe that if the community-based organizations, the early childhood programs etc., if those had not been there, there would probably be no Newark to even talk about resurrecting at this time.

I still see a lot of them around they're still working I think that they have made a difference, although none of what we have done has made as much difference as we had hoped it would make, and we haven't moved as fast as we would have liked to have done but I do think it is kind of what has helped make Newark a place that people still want to work with, a place that that people can get excited about, and that in spite of all of the ups and downs that Newark has had, you know, you always come back to the people and the spirit of the people and doing what you can to support that.

CURVIN: Thank you, great!